

THE
DISTREST
POEM



THE

DISTRESSED POET,

A

SERIO-COMIC POEM,

IN

THREE CANTOS.

BY

GEORGE KEATE, ESQ.

Sic me servavit Apollo.

HOR. SAT. LIB. I. SAT. IX.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY, Pall-Mall.

M.DCC.LXXXVII.



46
9.669
4

T O

GRYFFYDD PRICE, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR,

IN dedicating the following little Piece to you, I pay with pleasure a tribute to that intimacy, which has for so long a time subsisted between us.—You have on very many occasions, by your counsel, as well as by that warmth of regard so congenial to the Benevolence of your heart, protected the Author. Extend that protection now to his *youngest Child*—the Public, I gratefully acknowledge, have kindly provided for the others.

A 2

It

It is with peculiar propriety that I address this Poem to YOU, who, during a long and vexatious Law-suit, at all times was my Adverser and Friend, as being yourself perfectly convinced I had much hardship to complain of, and the more so, if my own *misplaced Confidence* had half shut the Door of Redress.

Though we have a Saying which allows those to laugh who *win*, yet there is none which prohibits those who *lose* to be merry. And if, under circumstances not usually productive of cheerfulness—if, having occurrences to struggle against totally *unlooked for*—if, harassed from Term to Term by *expensive Delays*—if, teased by an *Arbitration* awarded against me in so *unjustifiable* a manner as to be set aside, by the unanimous opinion of the Court, on the *sole bearing* of Counsel in *support* of it—if, sitting amidst
the

DEDICATION.

the Ruins of my own house, I could divert these unpleasant ideas by taking up my pen to play with Ill Fortune ;—it will prove that I contended without Animosity, and prosecuted mens *actions*—not the men.

Whoever may have a Suit at Common Law, which, like mine, shall linger on for a considerable while, will have more ample occasion to know the world, than a more peaceful intercourse with it would, in a long series of years, have taught him. My Litigation, from its subject, its peculiarity, and its duration, much attracted the Public notice : a *professional* alarm was sounded, and I found immediately that I had a Host to contend with. The attachment, the ardor, and the steadiness of my friends was as open and conspicuous as it was to me honourable and interesting.—It afforded me the highest gratification I could
feel,

feel, that of perceiving by how firm a tie I possessed the esteem of characters I truly loved and respected.

Whilst I am paying these friends my justly-merited acknowledgments, I reflect with the most sensible concern, that there *was* ONE amongst them whom my sentiments of gratitude can never more reach—I mean the late

ROBERT PALMER, ESQ; between whom and myself, in the long space of thirty-eight years, there had subsisted the firmest intimacy; who, to his last hour, was such an ornament to his profession, that few men through Life have been more *beloved*, or, in Death, more universally *regretted*.—It is not enough to say, that during my vexatious dispute, I had his Countenance, his Advice; but I will further add, that the personal Attendance of such a Character as *his* all the time of my different Trials, long as they

were, and at his advanced period of life, stamped a Credit both on *Me* and my *Cause*, whatever the issue of it proved to be.

I should also violate my own feelings, were I not to embrace this opportunity of publicly thanking those Gentlemen who were my Counsel in my late Trial (in which alone the full Merits of my Cause had the good fortune to be entered into), to whom my sincere acknowledgments for the full Exertion of their distinguished Abilities are as strictly due as gratefully paid: nor can I avoid expressing a real concern, that the unwearied assiduity, the skill, and the most laudable perseverance and attention of my Attorney, should not have procured him the merited satisfaction of obtaining one Triumph more, over *those Antagonists* whom he had *thrice before* compleatly conquered.

In

In the multitude of *professional* opponents whom I found I had to encounter, neither Justice or Gratitude would forgive me, were I to forget that faithful ABDIEL and his FRIEND, who, in MILTON'S words,

Unbaken, uneduc'd, untrifly'd,

PAR. Lost, Lib. v.

opposed the Phalanx, and dared not only to renounce the *professional* Creed, but openly to maintain the doctrine of Common Sense—That wherever there *was* TRUST, there *must* be RESPONSIBILITY.

Therefore, as my Cause was not lost from any defect of my Friends, nor yet from want of Firmness in my Witnesses, who all felt themselves bold in their own integrity, nor from want of Merits (as I had conceived till it was determined otherwise) I have no other Judgment to console myself with, but that

Pronounced

DEDICATION.

ix

pronounced long ago by the wise King of ISRAEL, and which I have not yet learned has been reversed for *Error* in any Court of WESTMINSTER HALL—That “*the Battle is not always to the Strong.*”

When FRANCIS THE FIRST was made prisoner at the battle of PAVIA, his undu-
 elled spirit communicated the event to his Mother in this memorable expression;—
Madame, tout est perdu hors l'honneur.—The latter consideration mitigated the former.—
 And if a DISTRESSED POET might presume to share with a DISTRESSED MONARCH the feelings of a Man, I would patiently console myself with the *same sentiment.*

After all, my worthy Friend, when we consider the pitiful disputes which so agitate the human race, whether excited by Misunderstanding, by Interest, or by Pro-
 b
 fligacy,

* D E D I C A T I O N,

Aggry, I am induced to think, that the Philosopher who can smile at them is a far wiser man than he who sits sorrowing over them.—The triumph of a Victor is, perhaps, almost as short-lived as the disappointment of the Conquered!—the impressions of both are transient!—Pass but a few fleeting years, and the hand of Time sweeps into the Regions of oblivious Silence the Plaintiff and Defendant, the Judge and Jury, who become as compleatly forgotten as the old Woman who retailed to the Court her *Parliament Gingerbread*.

Waiting, therefore, that happier *Æra* when no Complaint shall stand in want of a Remedy, let us laugh at those evils we cannot redress—we thereby preserve our Good-humour, and Good-humour is the Guardian of our health and spirits.—The journey of Life must inevit-

ably

DEDICATION.

xi

ably sometimes lead through rugged and difficult roads, yet it will always be rendered sufficiently pleasurable when we meet on our way with such Characters as YOUR'S; for which no one can entertain a more affectionate esteem than myself; who remain,

DEAR SIR,

Your obliged and faithful

Friend and Servant,

GEO. KEATE.

London,
May 1787.

ix. M O L T A C I D E D

-Nis bna baggut Agnoida bael agnitioni yids
Mordokai od agnita Niv ti yag miron miron
mo po baim av nacha vchilshaleq vchilshaleq
idit se'avo v av vachilshaleq d'vav d'vav
vchilshaleq vchilshaleq vchilshaleq vchilshaleq
vchilshaleq vchilshaleq vchilshaleq vchilshaleq

... D A N C

...

... E T A N O

...

THE

DISTRESSED POET.

CANTO THE FIRST.

SAY, why should POVERTY's prediction
O'ercloud the sprightly scenes of Fiction?
Wherefore so long entail'd its curse,
On all the numerous sons of Verse?
Who scarce possessing from their birth
A legal settlement on earth,
Exalted to a garret story,
Live on imaginary glory.

Ah! much I grieve to think how hard

The lot of an *Aerial Bard*!

B

Compell'd,

2 THE DISTRESSED POET.

Compell'd, himself so ill at ease,
To force a smile, and strive to please;
With nothing but bare walls in view,

To picture scenes he never knew!
To sing of *masques*, and *city-feasting*,

Things which he never dealt the least in ;

The anxious care that *wealth* creates,
Or which on *splendid fortune* waits :

Against his feelings and his wishes,
To cater and cook up strange dishes ; 20

To humour ev'ry patron's taste,
Flumm'ry for this, for that *puff* *passé* ;
Oft tarnish'd subjects burnish bright,
And make what's *black* in *grain* look *white*.

Nay, sometimes his poetic dreams
Waft him to more exalted themes ;
From his joint stool elate he soars,
And proud OLYMPUS' height explores,

His *Ranges*

CANTO THE FIRST.

3

Ranges in *lofty odes* the sky,
 Lost in *obscure sublimity*;
 For *true sublime* begins and ends
 In what no mortal comprehends,
 Fearless he treads those dread abodes,
 Where Jove drinks Nectar with the Gods,
 Tells all his ragamuffin stories,
 And damns his WHIGS, and damns his TORRES:
 Or where gay JUNO, somewhat silky,
 Her maids of honor treats with *whisky*;
 Her husband, vixen-like, bespatters,
 And tears each female's fame to tatters.—
 In congress see th' IMMORTALS sit,
 With less than *mortal* sense or wit;
 So coarse their thoughts, so low their jokes,
 You'd swear them all ST. GILES'S folks.—
 Th' impassion'd hard now trots, now prances,
 Still PINDAR-like curvets and dances;

Now

Now lost in cloud, now full in day,
 Till his feed fairly runs away:
 Quite parch'd with thirst he quits the sky,
 And finds his porter-pot run dry;
 Nay still, perchance, more direful hap,
 Can get no credit at the tap;
 The landlord, void of taste, refuses
 To wet the whistle of the Muses.
 Thus the shrill lark, on trembling wings,
 Upborn in air still soaring sings,
 At last almost escap'd from view,
 Drops to the earth from whence he flew;
 Ode-writers hence, if wise, should know,
 How quick the fall from *high* to *low*.
 The plowman who his song hath heard,
 Cares not three farthings for the bird;
 So those who deal in notes sublime,
 Are rarely paid their loss of time.

Tho'

CANTO THE FIRST.

5

Tho' ills like these, and many more,

Invest the poet's garret-door,

Whose pen and looks alike confess

The sharpen'd features of distress;

Yet some there are who court the NINE,

On whom the stars serener shine,

Who all at ease in Fortune's shades,

Sport with the fair Aonian Maids;

Whom no mean interests ever fire,

To prostitute the sacred lyre;

Whose artful strings are touch'd alone,

When willing Fancy gives the tone.

Whether intent to bring to light

That silent worth which shuns the sight;

Love's myrtle wreath for Beauty twine,

Or hang a lay on Friendship's shrine;

Some tale of fabled woe to rear,

And steal the plaudit of a tear;

To

To paint the triumph of a mind,
 To honor train'd, by truth refin'd;
 Or place the Hero bright in view,
 And give to virtue, virtue's due,
 Whatever their theme, their only claim,
 In all they write, is—honest fame.

A Bard like this, who never knew
 Those cares which oft his tribe pursue,
 Pleas'd would employ his vacant hours,
 By wak'ning Fancy's sportive powers;
 And if he haply chanc'd to start
 Some subject which engag'd his heart,
 If from that subject he could raise
 Lines that might glow in Virtue's praise,
 With anxious fondness he would nurse
 To prosperous growth his infant verse;
 And if, with diffidence and doubt,
 He brought at last his offspring out,

Set it before the public eye,
To know if it should live, or die,
'Twas trusting to experience yet
That candor he so oft had met.

But, Reader, to pursue my tale,
I must draw off Illusion's veil,
And freely own the boasted NINE,
Tho' by most writers deem'd *divine*,
Are tinctur'd, spite of all we're told,
And strongly too, with *mortal* mould. **110**
Deserting that exalted line,
Where they are destin'd most to shine,
Too often they'll foment a squabble,
In politics too often dabble;
Like wantons, lure, by winning ways, **115**
Th' incautious youth who stop to gaze;
Seduce them up PARNASSUS' steep,
Where scarce the *strong* firm footing keep,

And

And *weaker* followers slide and drop, 120
 Ere they have half attain'd its top. 120

These Dames too, of celestial birth,

As the vain beauties of the earth,

Proud of their charms, their power, their station,

Live like coquets on admiration: 125

And if they once indulgence show 125

To any votary below,

Who hath their magic arts admir'd,

And half believ'd himself inspir'd;

Should he perchance, in evil hour,

Become neglectful of their power, 130

Or if some rival charm should start,

To fascinate his yielding heart;

Then in their *heavenly* breasts is seen

The full effects of *mortal* spleen;

PARNASSUS straight is in a blaze, 135

The Muses run *nine* different ways, 135

All

End

All is cabal, complaint, and chatter,
None but themselves know what's the matter.

Each female passion now afloat,
By jealousy they're veer'd about,

140

-No arrogance of earthly beauty

Could more resent a breach of duty;

By conquest proud, they can't sustain

The loss of one who swell'd their train;

Each stratagem is put in motion,

145

To bring him back to their devotion.

Our Culprit, who no ill intended,

Had thus their Highnesses offended;

Their backs were up, their pride was nettled,

Their spirit rous'd, their hopes unsettled.

150

Be ours a great revenge, said they,

Muses, like dogs, will have *their day*;

C

And

TO THE DISTRESSED POET.

And we'll this truant Love despise,
By making *his* as black as *nigh*.
What I shall another boast the art
To alienate our votary's heart? **155**

Inflame his breast with other fires,
Than those our *Sisterhood* inspires;
But soon he to his cost shall know
We are not to be dealt with so. **160**

By AGANIPPE's sacred stream,
Of which delicious poets dream,
And rave and write, so much, you'd think

'Twas at their meals their constant drink;
By bright APOLLO's golden locks,
With which they'd grace their own dull blocks; **165**

Nay, by old PEGASUS beside,
Whom they all want to mount and ride,
Tho' they would strength and judgment lack
To sit five minutes on his back; **170**

By

By these we swear we'll never cease
To cross his projects and his peace,
Till he returns to his allegiance,
And vows us once again obedience.
Let us then, posting swift as wind,
The Monarch of our Mountain find!
His DELPHIC Worship ne'er refuses
To vindicate the Slighted Muses:
He'll rate the vagrant like a fury,
And be at once both judge and jury. 180

Ah, stop! fair Virgins of the lyre!—
Can fancied Slights such bosoms fire!
Say, can your minds *celestial* prove
Those paltry piques which *Mortals* move?
Or of those springs conceive a notion,
That set their dirty tricks in motion?—
Daughters of Jove! can You disgrace,
By squabbling thus, your royal Race?

112 THE DISTRESSED POET.

Wife as you are, you want a tutor;
Never run down a single suitor, 190

Nor treat your servants cavalierly,

Who earn, you know, their bread so dearly.

Your wages low, your liveries bare,

Your house-keeping as thin as air;

Fame's their sole vails, their only gain, 195

And this they often sue in vain;

Nay more, I'll tell you, by the bye,

You'd be mere nothings in the sky,

If the poor scribblers of the earth

Did not support your place and birth. 200

Tho' my assertion's bold, tis true,

You live by *them*, not they by *you*.

These flighty Dames in vain I'm teaching,

They're all bound'd off while I've been preaching;

Giddy, and train'd in scenes of fiction, 205

'They never listen to conviction

But

CANTO THE FIRST.

13

But spread their stories far and near,
Like mischief-making gossips here.

Ill-fortune to our Bard must follow!

They'll get a *summons* from Apollo, 210

Who, right or wrong, will take their part,

And find the means to make him smart.

Oh, NATURE! whose extended sway

All but the Sons of ART obey,

Who, blooming in immortal youth, 215

Around thee spread'st Grace, Love, and Truth;

Could thy simplicity thus fire

The jealous Muses' vengeful ire?

Can no one give up rhyme for reason,

But They must deem the action treason? 220

If our poor Poet 'gainst their laws

Hath err'd, thou only wast the cause;

For, DIVINE GODDESS, 'twas to THEE

He rais'd his eye, and bow'd his knee!

Wol

Won by thy pow'rs, the more he gaz'd, 225
 More on his sense thy beauties blaz'd;
 In all thy works his ravish'd eye
 Met nought but perfect harmony;
 No wonder then his raptur'd mind
 To NATURE's nobler charms inclin'd, 230
 Fond all her movements to revere,
 And trace her thro' her wide career,
 In all her silent shades conceal'd,
 Or in her loveliest blaze reveal'd.—
 Thus rous'd from Fancy's trivial dreams, 235
 To NATURE's more inviting themes,
 He aim'd to *sketch* her operations,
 When acting on the human passions;
 How bright the soul to Virtue gain'd,
 How dark, by vice or interest stain'd, 240
 How Truth with hand unerring darts
 How Innocence attracts all hearts!

How

How looks can plead, how sighs may teach
In terms more eloquent than speech |——

True votary now, he wish'd to raise

245

A little Temple to her praise,

Where he in elegant array

Her various wonders might display,

Exhibit the mysterious chain

Which links her complicated reign,

250

And spread on each illumin'd side

What Mines conceal, and Oceans hide.

'Twas this enrag'd the Muses' spirits,

And made their eyes as red as ferrets.

When passion shakes these lovely creatures,

255

They lose at once their *heavenly* features,

And in their poor degraded breast

Each *mortal* feeling stands confest.

Read but the wars of Greece and Troy,

At every school taught every boy:

260

Old

16 THE DISTRESSED POET.

Old HOMER pictures to our view

The manners of th' OLYMPIAN crew ;

How they deceive, cheat, fight, and squabble,

Far worse than any blackguard rabble ;

From the great cuckold-maker JOVE, 265

And the intriguing Queen of Love,

From drunken BACCHUS, swaggering MARS,

Down to the race of lesser Stars,

'Tis discord all, eternal brawling,

Nay worse, eternal caterwauling !— 270

Dian alone, of all the sky,

Affects to boast *virginity*,

Which makes each female there expose

Her *modesty* where'er she goes ;

And on her head a *moon* they flick, 275

To mark her for a *Lunatic*.

Now, Reader, if th' Immortal Race

Can thus OLYMPUS' realms disgrace,

If

If from the Court end of the world
Such wretched dialogues are hurl'd,

280

PARNASSUS hardly will be found
In more politeness to abound.

To own the truth, 'tis nearly equal,

As we shall shew you in the sequel.

Should you compassionate our Bard,

285

And think his persecution hard,

You'll wish to know how matters went ;

I hold the pen with that intent ;

But you must give a writer time,

Whether it be in Prose, or Rhyme,

290

Facts should be clear, and duly stated,

A tale is mar'd if ill related.

We'll leave our Poet for the present,

Indulging thoughts extremely pleasant,

Arranging all his future building,

295

Settling its ornaments and gilding:

D

Whilst

Whilst he's his votive scheme pursuing,
Unconscious of the mischief brewing,
Let us the angry Muses follow,
Who're on the wing to seek Apollo.

300

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

CANTO

CANTO THE SECOND.

NOW patience guard the luckless wretch,
Compell'd his thoughts and legs to stretch,

And round each crack and covert wind,
To look for what he cannot find!

Whether it be a great estate,

5

Which ne'er was destin'd him by Fate;

Or what he less might choose to mention,

A good snug place, or snugger pension;

Or for some debtor should he search,

Who basely left him in the lurch,

10

Or one, that rogue-like shrink'd his bail,

Who kindly sav'd him from a jail.

D 2

This

20

THE DISTRESSED POET.

This was in truth the Muses' cafe :

O'er all APOLO's haunts they pace ;

Nor up, nor round the sacred Mount,

15

Nor even at th' inspiring fount,

His vagrant Worship could be met,

This put our Ladies in a fret.

And, Reader, should I here explain

Why all their searches prov'd in vain,

20

Why this great laurell'd prince of rhyme

Was out of place, and out of time,

I can't unravel well the clue,

Or bring this matter fair to view,

Unless we both together pause,

25

And enter deeper in the cause.

You'll have no scruple to confess

An author's licence to digress ;

To travel on, without e'er stopping,

Or finding where to bait, or pop in,

30

Both

Both man and horse must quickly tire,
And Poets feel relax'd their fire;
Digression, therefore, pleads this merit,
We lose less leather, gain more spirit:
It acts just like a pioneer,
To make rough smooth, th' entangled clear,
And, as you journey on your ways
Serves as a road-map in your chaise;
You better comprehend what's doing,
And mark the very line you're going.

40

Now should we take a little survey,
How things came thus turn'd topsy-turvy,
Why these *Nine Ladies*, tho' inspir'd,
Hunted about till they were tir'd,
'Twill not seem strange, if once you know
What lengths *APOLLO* oft would go——
A very rambler from his birth,
Jigging o'er half the peopled earth;

45

OF

Of his strange pranks fill new proofs giving,
Changing his character and living.

50

Now through the Zodiac see him steer,
An enterprising charioteer,
And now fierce Pegasus bestriding,
O'er the wide range of metre riding;
From whose example, be it spoken,

55

So many necks have since been broken.

At Troy Town walls this mighty God
Did not disdain to bear a hod,
A Bricklayer then—and next he'll greet us,
As Cow-keeper to King Admetus

60

A fighting lover grown, in vain
He strives his DAPHNE's heart to gain,
Who calling power to aid her quarrel,
The cheated God embrac'd a laurel;
Round his unmanly temples placing
That foliage which was most disgracing.

65

8

OF

Of all the rake-shames in the sky,
None e'er possess'd less gallantry:

Sad NIOBE, thy fatal story

Confirms this truth, and stains his glory!

70

What! on a Lady draw his bow!

And to her race such vengeance show!

Merely because th' incautious Dame

Had half eclips'd his mother's fame,

Outshone her at a THEBAN ball,

75

And of LATONA took the wall;—

'Gainst MARSVAS next, turn'd butcher hard,

He flays alive a rival bard,

Leaving that spirit to our time,

Which heats too oft the sons of Rhyme,

80

Who merciless dissect each other,

And skin with critic rage a brother.

First fiddle to th' OLYMPIAN Train,

What hand could raise so sweet a strain!

And

And on his harp, no *Welchman* ever

58

Was half so dext'rous, half so clever,—

Besides all this, as in a glass,

He saw what'er would come to pass ;

Was Prophet, Soothlayer, and Wizard,

Could look into your heart and gizzard,

90

Whilst from his DELPHIC trumpet bound'd

Those idle omens he announc'd.

In these and fifty other parts,

The changeful God display'd his arts,

Equal in all—what'er his will

95

Urg'd him to act, he play'd with skill ;

To him it was indifferent quite,

Or time, or distance, day, or night,

From realm to realm convey'd as soon.

As if he rode an *Air-Balloon*.

100

Amongst

CANTO THE SECOND.

25

Amongst the numerous occupations,
Which carried him thro' different nations,
Impell'd by love, or spleen, or whim,
Fond o'er their various scenes to skim,
To *Physic* also he laid claim,
105 And the Art sanction'd with his name :
Tho' never bred at any college,
Nor from *Diplomas* claiming knowledge,
By much grimace, and more disguise,
The multitude esteem'd him wise. 110
The practice fill'd his hours of leisure,
To him 'twas frolic, change, and pleasure,
By it such scenes to him were shown,
As else he never might have known ;
It taught him easily to find 115
What foolish tricks can gull mankind.

'Twas thus his Godship pass'd his days,
Or quite incog, or in a blaze ;

E

His

His thoughts on some new project running,
To exercise his various cunning.

120

No wonder then the Muses went
Sometimes, as now, on a wrong scent.

No wonder that they thus, in vain,

Search'd for the Leader of their train,

Who, busied on his own affairs,

125

Had at this time neglected theirs ;

For at the instant I am speaking,

While they their laurell'd Chief were seeking,

His Highness, by conveyance neat,

Had quitted his poetic seat,

130

And by a medical vagary

Induc'd his plan of life to vary,

Disguis'd, in LONDON now sat down,

The greatest Quack in all the town,

And station'd snug on LUDGATE HILL,

135

By *Letters Patent* fold his Pill,

Whose

Whose virtues could, as hand-bills swore,
Life's secret labyrinths explore,
Each lurking mischief ferret out,
And all disorders fairly rout.— 140

O, Reader! had we time to stop,
And lounge ten minutes in his shop,
To mark his patients' various faces,
Relating all their piteous cases,
Whilst he, with scientific smile, 145

Feels for their pains, their nerves, their bile,
And vows, if they'll but take his pills,
He'll free them soon from all their ills;
The scene indeed might prove inviting,
Yet the strict critic laws of writing, 150

Which no such sportive licence know,
Command that we straight forward go;
No deviation's here permitted,
Nor must our turnpike road be quitted,

28 THE DISTRESSED POET.

Till on their own, or other ground, 155

Th' Aonian Maids once more are found:

Thanks to our stars, our point in view

Demands not a mysterious clue;

Nor needs it, to make matters clear,

Back to PARNASSUS that we steer, 160

Since these high Dames, who far outvie

All others in sagacity,

No sooner found APOLLO gone,

Than they their travelling wings put on,

And posting thro' the yielding air, 165

Full speed to LONDON all repair:

Arriv'd, there could not be a doubt

But they would find him quickly out;

They nos'd his Highness with the ease

That cats smell mice, or mice smell cheese, 170

Nor in this great bamboozled town

Was KATTAPELTO better known,

Or

Or Doctor GRAHAM's powerful bed,
Of which such wond'rous things were said ;
On each dead wall of every street

175

His pasted folio puffs they meet,
“ Descriptive of his pill's success,
“ Which scores were ready to confess,
“ How small their price, how great their pow'rs,
“ And what the Doctor's usual hours.”

180

The Muses look'd at one another,
And scarce a giggling fit could smother :
Tho' they had many a time before
Seen his caprices o'er and o'er,
They ne'er conceiv'd his laurell'd head

185

By a tie-wig would be o'erspread,
Or that he'd quit his glorious line,
As patron to the sacred NINE,
On fair OLYMPUS turn his back,
Once Prince of Poets, now a Quack :

190

But

But some vagary to pursue,
What will not Gods or Mortals do !

Our Ladies, it must be confess'd,
Were at this matter much distress'd ;
Their pride was hurt, their own Apollo
Could such a sniv'ling business follow,

195

Or have for Quack'ry such an itch :
But being now just at FLEET DITCH,

'Twas neither a fit place or season
On all his foolish pranks to reason,

200

So LUDGATE HILL they straight ascended,
And at his shop their journey ended.

Now when these fair PARNASSIAN trippers

The Doctor found, in cap and slippers,
Smoaking his pipe, and on his table

205

His pot of porter, quite unable

Longer

Longer to hide their swelling ire,

Th' immortal Master of the lyre

They thus address'd—What! does Apollo

Think we can this ill treatment swallow?

210

Without a Chief our Mountain left,

Ourselves of patronage bereft;

Is't not enough to rouse our passion,

To find we're getting out of fashion?

Our altars, which burnt once so bright,

215

Casting a poor expiring light,

Whilst you, turn'd Mountebank below,

Care not above how matters go?—

Who'd e'er have dream'd the God of Verse

Could condescend to act the nurse?

220

Roll up vile pills, cut corns, spread blisters,

And change your pipe to pipe of glisters?

Rouse, rouse, for shame, and aid our quarrel,

Burn your tie-wig, and take your laurel;

4

Your

Your native Skies once more ascend, 225
 And all this trifling nonsense end !
 Whilst you are physicking the nation
 We lose our power of inspiration,
 As much distress'd and out of case
 As ministers when out of place. 230
 Who will invoke, or who obey
 The Muses, who no longer sway ?
 Each writer now will take to prosing,
 And all his readers take to dosing.
 If Genius once is lull'd to sleep, 235
 Who will the fine PARNASSUS keep,
 'Twill turn to a *tea-drinking Garden*,
 Nor you nor we be worth one farthing.
 His tube APOLLO now laid down,
 His noble brow assum'd a frown : 240
 Zounds, Girls, the angry God reply'd,
 Who can your cursed noise abide ?

CANTO THE SECOND.

35

In PLUTO's name, say what's the matter,
What brings you here, or why this chatter?

Nine clacks at once together going, 245

And not a soul the reason knowing!

I plainly see with half a glance,

Your tongues have got ST. VIRGIL's dance,

They jig so much, and make such slips,

You cannot keep them in your lips; 250

A pill of mine will set all right,

And you shall each take one to-night.

The MUSES, fearing that APOLLO

His *pill* might with a *blister* follow,

Lower'd their haughty tone.—Your pills, 255

Great Sir (they cry'd) can't cure our ills;

But in your pow'r, and your science,

Your Servants place most firm reliance,

Quite confident your Godship never

From us will your affection fever.

260

F

Nor

Nor wonder if both pride and spirit
 From you, our Sov'reign, we inherit;
 And if with too much warmth and zeal
 We to that Sov'reign now appeal,
 Think what just rage must be excited

265

In *Nine young Females* basely slighted.
 Is't not enough that ev'ry day
 Our once firm champions steal away,
 And all their rapt'rous ardour close
 Not in brisk verse, but stupid prose?
 Sure this will vindicate our fury

270

Before yourself, or any jury.
 Nay, with all these vexations rife,
 ONE whom we deem'd our own for life,
 ONE whom thro' ANCIENT ROME * we led,
 And taught the dang'rous ALPS * to tread,
 And thence his steps conducted where
 Our much belov'd, much mourn'd VOLTAIRE

275

* Alluding to Poems of that name formerly written by the Author.

CANTO THE SECOND.

35

In FERNEY * fix'd that splendid throne

Which your own voice confirm'd his own; 280

One too, who ween'd no Lady Muse

To aid his purpose durst refuse,

Whether he chose to move along

Plaintive, in *elegiac song*,

Or, sporting to some lighter measure, 285

Unlock'd gay Humour's *comic* treasure,

Hath from our standard basely flown,

And to a Rival preference shown.

Can you believe? th' apostate creature

All his addressees pays to NATURE! 290

To her his faithless arms he stretches,

Her charms adores, her movements *sketches*;

To her a TEMPLE now he's raising,

Where soon her altar will be blazing,

And all her treasures sparkle round, 295

And the proud Dome her fame resound,

Unless

Unless our own AROURO aids,
 The cause of his deserted Maids,
 And blasting Falshood in its birth,
 Dashes this Edifice to earth.

Since (quoth the God) you've found your manners,

I may perchance defend your banners;
 But ne'er will I, unless I'm tipsy,

When JOVE himself is not *se ipse*,
 Be bully'd by a female's tongue,
 Tho' glib as JUNO's it were hung.

I've patiently the business heard,
 Which hath all this ill temper stirr'd;
 I feel your wrongs as much as you,
 And we'll a just revenge pursue;

For, Girls, while you remain discreet,
 Who dares slight you my wrath shall meet:
 This truant, who so false a wretch is,
 Shall shortly rue his *praise* and SKETCHES;

We'll

We'll of his TEMPLE soon bereave him, 315

Then see if NATURE can relieve him ;

He'll find her influence prove but vain,

And sue once more to join your train ;

But 'twould not suit my laurell'd crown

With my own hand to dash it down. 320

Kings, when some dirty trick they try,

To dirtier ministers apply,

Who stand before them as a screen,

While they indulge their power or spleen ;

Thus I'll destroy by slow degrees 325

Th' Apostate's pleasure and his ease,

And, better to attain this end,

I'll do it by his *bosom friend* ;

'Twill give a keener pang besides,

If wounded where he *most confides*. — 330

When Troy was built, you recollect

I dabbled as an *Architect* ;

38 THE DISTRESSED POET.

A very sorry one, you'll say,
But worse since then have come in play,
And of the art I've under stood
Enough, to do more harm than good;
From better heads ideas stealing,
To plan a frieze, or form a ceiling:
I'll hint the means while the work's doing,
To make his Edifice a ruin;
And he shall find his schemes defeated,
Before his building is compleated.
There is beside, in this great town,
A Dame of infamous renown,
Whose great delight is to embarras,
Torment the weak, the manly harass,
And by her dark malignant arts
Aims to disturb ingenuous hearts;
Living the plague of half the nation,
Mischief her trade, her name VEXATION;
335

I

In

CANTO THE SECOND.

39

In our own scheme her aid we'll join,
And thus compleat the great design.

But now, my Girls, 'tis growing late,
St. Paul's hath long ago struck eight,
And, since we've set all matters right,
E'en take your beds with me to-night;
Being all birds of the same feather,
You may contrive to roost together.

To tramp the streets at such an hour
Would put you in each Puppy's pow'r,
Who nothing would more gladly chuse,
Than to pick up a *straggling* Muse.
I know this Town enough to say,
Here Folly reigns with amplest sway,
Making those kindred vices thrive
Which help to keep my shop alive.—

365

Nor think, soft Virgins of the lyre,
Ignoble views my schemes inspire,

IF

40 THE DISTRESSED POET.

If oft my radiant form I shroud,
And mix with the terrestrial crowd,
To such odd frolics I'm inclin'd,
370

Merely to better know mankind,
Closer to read the human race,
Which some adorn, but more disgrace:
Thus I on all their actions gaze,
375

And mark their little dirty ways,
Passing their lives in toil and pother,
By turns a prey to one another:
I'm truly weary of the sight,
And shortly mean to take my flight;
380

But first I'll make your Culprit own,
Renew'd obedience to your throne,
That future Bards, in future times,
Who dare for *Prose* relinquish *Rhymes*,
By his example may be taught,
385
Secession's punish'd as it ought.

This

This justice done, I shut my shop,
And seek with you Olympus' top,
Where I will make our old dad Jove,
And all the jolly folks above,
Shake their imperial sides with laughter,

395

At what I shall recount hereafter,
When I describe them to a tittle
This town, of which they know so little.

The various scenes I've here survey'd,
Conceal'd beneath this masquerade ;

400

The characters with which it teems,
Some broad awake, some lost in dreams,
And in the midst of Arts and Science,
Oft bidding Common Sense defiance.

But this at proper time you'll know,
Let us now down to supper go,

405

G

And

42 THE DISTRESSED POET.

And our convivial hour prolong,
With some good old PARNASSIAN song;
Then, till the ruddy morn shall rise,
In peaceful slumbers close your eyes. 410

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

CANTO

CANTO THE THIRD.

NO—not for all that empty fame
Can give, or happiest writers claim,

Nor what to Bards is most bewitching,

The run of a warm plenteous kitchen ;

Tho' DODSLEY beckon'd with his purse, 5

DODSLEY, the Poets' friend and nurse,

No—not for all beneath the skies,

Would I offend *The Unities* ;

Nor my historic Tale disgrace

By want of Action, Time, or Place ; 10

Or in this little Drama bring,

Or person, circumstance, or thing,

G 2 That

44 THE DISTRESSED POET.

That Critics, tho' severe, should not
Deem most essential to the plot,
That thus each part well ty'd together,
The whole may stand both wind and weather.
Tho' in obedience to these rules,
We find too often Genius cools,
I hold it classical and right
To keep them ever in our sight.

15

20

Now, Reader, 'tis expedient here
That a new Personage appear,
Not new to all, tho' some won't own
They have before this Lady known,
Of whom Apollo mention made,
In what he to the Muses said;
Nor needs there trumpeting or drumming,
To tell you that VEXATION'S coming;
Yet ere she reaches the Stage-door,
Allow me just to step before,

25

30

And

C A N T O - T H E T H I R D.

45

And as the ancient CHORUS came,
Give you the outlines of this Dame.

A *Welch* Attorney was her Sire,
A thing of petulance and fire,
Who would for ten pence go to law,
Then either make, or find a flaw,
And by his art, and his delusion,
Set a whole parish in confusion.
For plunder ever lying wait,
He'd mortgage thrice the same estate,
Would take a bribe on either side,
And Justice and the Devil defy'd.

40

The spawn of this intriguing creature
Was like her Dad in mind and feature;
Rebellious even in the womb,
She fought her way for elbow-room,

45

And

And so disorderly her birth,
 The suffering mother sunk to earth.
 This child, that bad might still be worse,
 Was suckled by a *bilious* nurse,
 Who for the breast whene'er she'd call,
 Plump'd not her veins with milk but *Gall*.
 A crooked fallow thing she grew,
 As artful as a GERMAN Jew;
 The father lov'd her next his pelf,
 In her he saw a second self,
 And when that awful summons came,
 Which only could his rogueries tame,
 He left this darling all his wealth,
 Together scrap'd by fraud or stealth;
 With which she blazon'd up and down,
 A rich *Welch* Heiress on the town.
 But having pass'd her youthful days
 In Mischief's dark and winding ways,

E'en

E'en fordid Int'rest felt afraid 65

To court this antiquated maid ;

She on mankind returns the flight,

Pursuing them with keenest spite.

The public prints she daily stains

With the sharp venom of her brains, 70

By bland'rous paragraphs and flurs

Tainting the purest characters.

At ev'ry Rout you'll see her betting,

And all concern'd with her a fretting ;

She makes the *young*, with stifled curses, 75

And ill-mark'd smiles untie their purses,

Whilst from *old Ladies*, scarcely able

To waddle out to a card-table,

She sily steals away the *Trumps*,

Till disappointment bursts their jumps. 80

On the *first night* of a new play,

She'd sooner die than be away ;

48 THE DISTRESSED POET,

Where circled with her *catcall* train,
 She half distracts the Author's brain.
 Oft too her GORGON head she'll pop,
 And Critic sit in DODSLEY'S shop,
 Where half-fledg'd Poets new on wing,
 Who've made their first attempt to sing,
 Hover unknown, with anxious ear
 Th' opinion of the world to hear;
 She with sharp tongue condemns their style,
 Their thoughts how coarse! their rhymes how vile!
 Her fell remarks their Genius stagger,
 And ev'ry pointed word's a dagger.
 And this is she whose artful pranks
 Makes all our Lottery Tickets—*Blanks*;
 Who when our friends or kinsmen die,
 Wipes out *th'* *expected* legacy,
 And gives away, to wound our rest,
 The place *long hop'd*, tho' ne'er possess'd.

Now

Now the new morn broke true with sleep,
In usher'd by the *Chimney Sweep*,
And that discordant found *Old Cloaths*,
Croak'd thro' a snuffling *Hebrew* nose;
Sots from their night's debauch home strolling,
Stage-coaches to the country rolling;
Fishwomen, warm'd with Gin, debate,
All tramping quick to BILLINGSGATE,
Whilst fifty intermingled cries,
In jargon inarticulate rise: 110
Fogs and *black smoke* together meet,
As they would both dispute the street,
Agreed, the Atmosphere they share,
And their dark trains cloud all the air.

The Muses look'd around them yawning, 115
They ne'er had seen so queer a dawning;
Indeed the NINE with truth might say,
'Twas the burlesque of opening day.—

H

Unlike

50 THE DISTRESSED POET.

Unlike at home what cheer'd their sight,

When close behind retiring NIGHT,

AURORA from the East ascending,

With the gay playful Hours attending,

Scatters around her purple rays,

Till all creation feels the blaze,

Warm, unimpeded, and serene,

They gild and gladden ev'ry scene.

Th' expanding flowers shake off the dew,

And spread their beauties to her view,

Whilst the wing'd ZEPHYRS hov'ring round,

Brush'd the rich perfumes from the ground,

And with their odours mark'd the way,

The splendid track of orient DAY.

Tho' thus fair morn to these fair Maids

Brighten'd their own AONIAN shades,

Yet they had sense enough to know

In LONDON things could not be so;

Where

Where the NORTH EAST, o'er kennels blowing,
Must be more stinks than sweets bestowing,
Which, wafted from close courts, dead walls,
And murky lanes that round St. Paul's
On LUDGATE HILL assail'd their noses
With smells, unlike the smell of Roses.—
But practis'd travellers little care
Whether or well, or ill they fare,
To each occurrence patient bend,
Still pushing forward to their end.

145

APOLLO, by his maid, requested
To know how his *nine* guests had rested ;
Who in the humblest terms exprest,
Her master was both shav'd and drest,
And, whensoever they were at leisure,
That breakfast would attend their pleasure.
The MUSES, all alert, descended,
And on his tea-table attended.

150

This country (cries the pleasant God)

155

To you, dear Girls, must seem but odd;

With your celestial frames ill-suited;

Here life's perpetually recruiting,

And without three good meals a day,

Its wasting wheels won't keep in play;

160

Let me, as Doctor, then advise,

To eat the moment that you rise;

See, I've provided you good stuffing,

Here's *Toast*, and *Yorkshire Cake*, and *Muffin*,

And the *best Tea* without exception,

165

Unmixt and *free from all deception*.—

This business over, we'll pursue

The scheme which so much interests you,

And seek this mischief-making Dame,

On whom we now must have a claim.

170

Close to that venerable *HALL*,

Where suitors loud for justice call,

Which

Which in old times old RUFUS built,

A theatre for *Truth* and *Guilt*

Whereon Contention's scenes to draw,

175

And the dull pantomime of law,

Stood the well-noted habitation

Of this great Queen of Plots, VEXATION.

It was not for the first time now,

APOLLO made this Dame his bow,

180

Having, in his doctorial station,

Confer'd on her much obligation,

By patching up, from dissolution,

A sad old Devil's constitution,

One of our Lady's Cater-Cousins,

185

Who'd cut up characters by dozens,

And liv'd as naturally on flander,

As does by fire the SALAMANDER.

It

It was VEXATION'S boast and pride,
When call'd on, ne'er to be deny'd ;

190

And, tho' a damp to joy all thought her,
Yet, strange to tell ! most people fought her.

She, putting on a semblance hearty,

Welcom'd the Doctor, and his party,

Whilst her poor brain was rack'd in vain,

195

To know whence came his beauteous train :

They, in return, could scarce forbear

To giggle at this Beldam's air ;

Two vixen eyes, as black as sloes,

Stood centry on each side her nose, 200

Which, near in contact with her chin,

Cast o'er her cheeks a ghastly grin :

Her back and shoulders out of place,

Gave to her form no added grace ;

Yet what kind Nature had denied, 205

By Affectation was supplied ;

High

High o'er her antiquated head

The Ostrich' waving plume was spread,

Whence streaming lappets, ribbands, gauze,

Seem'd to insult grave Age's laws,

210

Whilst round her squat, distorted waist

A fashionable *Sash* was plac'd,

Making one grieve the *Coral* too

With all its *bells* hung not in view,

By which spectators might have learn'd

215

That *second Childhood* was return'd,

And seen, where modish Folly revels,

How much it all distinction levels.

The God of Verse with strength and grace

Unfolded artfully his case,

220

Like a warm advocate repeated,

How ill his clients had been treated,

Their patrimonial Rights invaded,

Their influence shook, their pow'r degraded:

3

Then

Then nam'd the Bard whose rebel spirit 225
Could thus their just resentment merit,
Their long-prov'd services deserting,
To be with old Dame Nature flirting;
Expos'd the visionary schemes
O'er which the doating culprit dreams, 230
Whence he is destin'd soon to wake,
Completely dup'd by his mistake.
And, Madam, adds the God, since you
Mischief's nice stratagems pursue,
Know, while his Paramour he's praising,
To *Her* a Temple he is raising; 235
Your subtle arts to ours then join,
And crush his profligate design.

At the bare mention of the matter,
VEXATION's teeth began to chatter, 240
And her eyes such a sparkle put on,
Each glitter'd like a coxcomb's button:

Doctor,

Doctor, says she, with hand and heart

I'll in this business take a part;

I know the fellow, to my cost,

245

By him *I* too some power have lost;

Men of his even, temperate mind,

To *Me* are ever disinclin'd;

He takes a pride to show me slights,

Still censures me in all he writes,

250

Meets me with contumelious eye,

Arm'd in his tough Philosophy:

Each, like ACHILLES, hath a heel,

Some weaker part that's sure to feel,

And in his Wisdom's spite, I'll teach him

255

VEXATION knows the way to reach him.—

I've learnt his plan, and his intentions,

His Building seen, and its dimensions;

I've plac'd about him, *One* whose art

Shall steal on his unguarded heart,

260

I

And,

58 THE DISTRESSED POET.

And, whilst he thinks all's rightly doing,
 I'll mark this Edifice for ruin.
 He may, by his own Fancy smitten,
 Write jokes, as he before hath written;
 He on *delusive Taste* may call*,
 To decorate his destin'd wall,
 Bidding it fly on treach'rous wing,
 And on each side its *Graces fling*.
 Whatever he has said or sung,
 The Fool shall find himself is hung.
 O'er the whole work (its sure perdition)
 I'll spread a *Magick Composition*,
 By which it ne'er shall dry, or answer
 But be eat out, as by a *Cancer*.
 Nor here shall the Infection stop;
 Quite from the bottom to the top.

* Burlesque Ode, Keate's Poems, Vol. II.

The Timbers all shall rot and blacken,
Their heart decay, their surface blacken;

All which I easily can master,
By this most *wonder-working* plaster, 280

Whose fermentation and rank juice
Shall make what's done of little use.

Thus, I by slow, yet sure degrees
Will shake his Building and his Ease,
And when I've tortur'd ev'ry feeling, 285

Sudden shall fall *th'* *Etruscan* Ceiling;

The ground with beauteous fragments strewing,
Spreading a dusty cloud of ruin,

Whilst the scar'd Bard, his Child, and Wife,
Shall blest their Stars, They scap'd with life; 290

For I'll so manage his condition,
A hair shall part him from perdition.

Faith, cries APOLLO, I see clearly

You'll treat this Fellow damn'd severely,

60 THE DISTRESSED POET.

To render useless his expences, 295

Then scare him out of half his senses;

For me, I think 'twould be enough

To give him one good hearty cuff;

A blow from *you* but rarely fails;

The print of sweet VEXATION'S nails, 300

In all great instances, we find,

Leave long-remember'd marks behind:

Besides, beyond a certain length

Should you exert your art and strength,

You know that *Mastiff-like*, our *Laws* 305

Stand grinning with their wide-mouth'd jaws,

To *snarl*, and *tear* th' insulting hand

Which dares their *mighty Grovel* withstand;

Tho' sometimes too they turn and bite

The very man that's in the right. 310

Now, should our Culpit in distress

Seek their protection and redress,

And,

And, all his injuries strongly marking,
 Set these same *legal Dogs* a barking,
 Where is the man can say, or know,
 When thus attack'd, how things may go?
 Our great design may burst in air,
 And *you*, and *I*, like stuck-pigs stare.
 Therefore, once more, my dear VEXATION,
 Let me advise for—MODERATION. 320

What! says great CAMBRIA'S fiery Dame,
 Her little bullet-eyes all flame,
 What! Doctor, don't your sniv'ling spirit
 Know the high blood that I inherit?
 Train'd from my youth in ev'ry art
 Law's studied *Mysteries* could impart,
 All its close labyrinths known to me;
 My poor dear Father had a key,
 By which he was for ever finding
 Some secret clue, some tangled winding, 330

Where

Where he his Adversaries misg'd,
 And his own Clients often mis'd.
 I have besides a *certain light*,
 By which what's *black* I show as *white*;
 Nor do I argument e'er lack,
 To change again what's *white* to *black*.
 The Law's a *Turn* stuck on a pivot,
 It turns with every *Wind* you give it;
 You think it blows for *you* its best,
 Its chops about from East, due West,
 And at its motions whilst you're looking,
 You find you are completely took in.
 How oft you hear weak people cry,
 My cause is clear in the *Law's Eyes*.
 But I to such poor souls could hint
 A Secret, that *Law's Eyes* both *squint*;
 They think that full on *them* they play,
 Tho' they look quite a different way,

So hard to get their real Focus,

They're aptly call'd Law's *Hocus Pocus*. — 350

Therefore, good Master Doctor, ne'er

About this Rebel's anger care; joy

Should he, in lack of Sense or Wit,

Presume to serve me with a Writ,

On his unguarded side I'll try — 355

The force of my Artillery;

Sue in what Court he will, I'll match him,

And ere I've done I'll surely catch him.

Lord help the Fool he little knows — 360

The Devil himself can't me oppose: — 360

He'll in the Hall a *stranger* roam,

Vexation there is quite *at home*;

On every side I've friends by dozens,

And half the Lawyers are my *Cousins*.

The Muses to their patron God — 365

Wink'd with a fly, familiar nod,

As each would say, this Lady's steady,
 In our just cause to prove most steady.
 Apollo twitch'd his wig about,
 His nobler mind had yet some doubt,
 He knew the ties which held Mankind
 Half were *slip-knots*, tho' half might bind.
 'Twas not for nothing he had travell'd,
 Man's artful tricks he had unravell'd,
 Had seen enough to make him certain,
 Things oft' were mov'd behind a Curtain,
 So that sharp Eyes, and wisest Notions,
 Could not discern what caus'd their motions:
 Hence his Reflections shew'd him clear,
 Law was compos'd of *Hope* and *Fear*,
 So nicely pois'd th' alternate scale,
 Jove only knew which would prevail,
 'Twas a *Toss-up*, as mortals say,
 The *Luck*, or *Cunning* of the day.

Pond'ring these matters deep, quoth he, 385

Justice and Law should still agree ;

And what so much excites our wonder,

Is, they so oft stand wide asunder ;

Crimes were by Reason ever meant

To feel proportion'd punishment, 390

But think you that a roving spirit

A sentence so severe can merit ?

Or have we, Madam, any right,

To crush his rising Temple quite ?

Besides, should you employ a Friend, 395

His treacherous Art with yours to blend,

Tho' I once lik'd the plan, I fear

'Twould shock and wound the public ear.

The world with just abhorrent eye

Beholds each act of PERFDY, 400

Still prompt with curses to upbraid

INGRATITUDE—or TRUST betray'd—

This

This very deed will blast us all,
 And *We* shall with the building fall,
 By milder methods we may tame him,
 And from his truant fit reclaim him. 455

Reader, no doubt you've sometimes seen
 The rapid workings of the Spleen,
 When the sharp Bile disturb'd is dropping,
 And all Good-humour's vessels stopping, 410
 Curdles "*the Milk of Human Kindness*,"
 Darkens the sight as if with blindness;
 Fermenting upwards from the Hip,
 Reddens the Eye, and Nose's tip,
 And casts such shadow o'er the face,
 Its former features scarce you trace;
 Just as you may have notic'd, when
 Anger distorts a *Bantam* Hen,
 Her Form quite crumpled up together,
 Head, Back, and Wing one tuft of Feather. 420

So, in VEXATION's swelling breast,
The throbs of passion were confest,
Whilst she, with looks of scowling pride,
Thus to the God of VERSE reply'd.

In PHYSIC, Sir, you may be wise,
In LAW, your knowledge I despise;
In your own way the point to urge,
You know that *Salap's* sure to purge,
That *Blisters* irritate the skin,
Emetics clear the parts within; 430

Now LAW, by me infus'd, supplies
Th' effects of these *three Remedies*,
Acting as each, its power I quicken,
Make it *work*,—*irritate*,—and *sicken*;
From TERM to TERM the dose I'll ply, 435
Till I drain all his Humours dry,
And what, perhaps, may still be worse,
Drain too, the substance of his purse.

To prove he's hamper'd by Vexation,
I'll plague him with an *Arbitration*, 440

To compass which, I'll call from far and near,
The influence of the Polar Star,
Tho' its weak powers can little act,

'Twill serve my purpose to protract;
By poorest Tools we often try 445

To gain a point, then throw them by,

And from the Law's delay, you know,

Far more than half its evils flow.

But—greater things I have in view,

Than what I now declare to you; 450

On my sagacity recline,

You have *your* NOSTRUMS, I have *mine*:

Therefore, good Doctor, rest assur'd,

Your patient shall by me be cur'd. 455

APOLLO took his hat and rose, 455

Here let, said he, our conference close,

Convinc'd,

Convinc'd, I to your guidance yield,
 And leave you Mistress of the field;
 To give these injur'd Damselfs ease,
 Act with the Culprit as you please. 460
 He bow'd—Each Muse with smile serene
 Curt'ying, flipt on her Capuchin,
 And one by one all fiddled out,
 Like modish Ladies from a Rout.

To LUDGATE-HILL once more return'd, 465

Girls! you of Law enough have learn'd,
 (His Godship cry'd); I think 'tis clear
 Our own ASTRÆA ne'er dwelt here,
 Or if she did, I ne'er could find
 She left her *righteous Scales* behind, 470

By which invaluable treasure
 Man might to Man more Justice measure!
 For since by Vice the world was humbled,
Wrong hath with *Right* been strangely jumbled!

70 THE DISTRESSED POET.

The Beldam whom we lately left, 475

Tho' of all principle bereft,

O'er mortals sways with sov'reign Rule,

And plagues alike the wise and fool,

Can turn and twist things as she pleases,

Herself the worst of all diseases.— 480

But, SISTERS of the Lyre! no more

Your Renegado lost deplore,

By me convinc'd, he'll soon return,

And with the zeal of Duty burn.

Law and VEXATION both together

May raise a Tempest hard to weather;

They may *conjoin'd* fulfil their aim,

But they shall ne'er his *Spirit* tame;

Myself will nerve him to despise

Th' *Auxiliar Blasts* which round him rise,

And *unprovok'd* their force unite

T' overwhelm the wretched Culprit quite.— 490

The

The storm once calm'd, I'll to his view
Picture the joys of Peace and You,
Teach him no more his hours to waste
With faithless Friends in frippery taste;
Severely school'd, I'll turn his eye
From where his mould'ring Ruins lie,
To scenes more pleasing, which belong
Alone to Harmony and Song,
Where to regain your smiles intent,
You'll mark him a true penitent,
And, as first off'ring to your Grace,
He shall IN VERSE RECORD HIS CASE.

From ev'ry apprehension eas'd,
Seeing each Muse, like PUNCH, look'd pleas'd,
Your business, quoth APOLLO, done,
My race of QUACK'RY now is run,
And therefore with the morning light
We'll to PARNASSUS take our flight;

But,

72 THE DISTRESSED POET.

But, as I'm quite fatigu'd with talking,
If my Back-parlour you'll just walk in,
We'll have a little snug regale
Of CHESHIRE Cheese, and BURTON Ale;

'Twill comfort your *celestial* chops,
And make you Girls all sleep like tops.

Yet now,—as we'll be off by fix,
On my Shop-door a Bill I'll fix:

My *Landlord's* clamour to prevent,
I'll on the Counter leave his Rent;

My PILLS and GALLYPOTS may stay,

They'll serve the *Parish Rates* to pay;

Faith, I'd leave ENGLAND in my shirt,

Ere let my Frolics one man hurt.

What multitudes would have been staring,

To see these Folks set out their Airing,

Had but the *How* and *When* been known

To half the *Idlers* of the Town!

The

The Houses' tops, each Church and Steeple,
Stuck round with eyes, had swarm'd with people: 530
But quite conceal'd from public view,
Inceg, their *Highbesses* withdrew,
An ambient cloud their persons coated,
And silent through the air they floated.

Urborn to regions far more clear, 535
Beyond this murky Atmosphere,
Their Forms all chang'd, each seem'd to shine
Replete with Majesty divine.
Cutting acrofs th' etherial Blue,
Their cloud assum'd a silv'ry hue, 540

Unfur'd its wavy folds, and show'd
The Opal Car on which they rode:
Central appear'd the DELPHIC GOD,
Twin'd round his brows the Laurels nod,
Bright in immortal youth he glow'd, 545
Adown his neck his ringlets flow'd,

L

And

74 THE DISTRESSED POET.

And whilst his eye shot forth his mind,
Upon his Lyre his hand redoubl'd,
Each Muse in various robes array'd,
The emblem of her Rule display'd,
Graceful around sat all the Band,
Nor Fiction's pow'r, nor Sculpture's hand,
E'er lovelier pictur'd Beauty's Queen,

'Than these fair Virgins now were seen,
Light mov'd the gallant Troop along,
Not without Converse, Wit, and Song,
And with their Frolic much delighted,
Safe on PARNASSUS' Top alighted.

CELESTIAL MAIDS ! as 'tis from You
I'm taught my Errors past to rue,
As you've this *fiery Trial* sent
To make me a true Penitent ;
Since your CONFEDERATES, as appears,
Have shook my House about my ears,

Nor yet, to solace my disaster,

565

Left me one inch—of *sticking* Plaster,

Since you by LAW have drain'd my purse,

And brought me back from *Prose* to *Verse*,

Give, in return, your Inspiration,

To turn the balance 'gainst VEXATION;

570

Let my Good-humour still remain,

To prove her shafts were shot in vain;

By You enabled thus, I still

May write,—to pay—*my Lawyer's Bill*.

T H E E N D.

E R R A T A.

CANTO I. Line 265, *for the read that.*

— II. — 331, *should begin a fresh Paragraph.*

— III. — 122, *for gay read young.*

— — 131, *for mark'd read mark.*

202. Иот yet, to solace ot, day tot

203. Гот me one in the ot—don't eno an. As I

204. since you by G. yd moy enis

205. and brought me back from Pyg to Kye

206. Give, in return, you, must in

207. To turn the palace's Guard, Alexan?

208. Get my Good-bye——to give her in

209. By you enabled, she, I can

210. My wife—to say ot—give you

211. I H E E N T

212. E K B A E

213. Canto I. Line 202. and I. I
214. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.